

**MINUTES**  
**WILLIAMSTOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**February 25, 2008**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**Present:** David A. Rempell, Chairman, Ronald Turbin, Jane B. Allen, Richard C. Steege, Tom Costley

**Others Present:** Andrew Bernardy, Kim Wells, Maribeth Pomerantz, Wendy Penner, Nancy Nylen, Philip McKnight, Richard Schlesinger, Tom Ennis, Peter Fohlin, Kathy Poirot

**1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING STATEMENT:** Mr. Rempell asked that any citizens interested in serving on a town board or committee stop by the town manager's office to fill out a citizen's activity form. He said seats were available on the Affordable Housing Committee, Agricultural Commission and the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority. Mr. Rempell thanked Marge Ware for her service on the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority.

**2. SELECTMEN MINUTES:** February 11, 2008 – Ms. Allen moved to approve the February 11, 2008 minutes with one revision in 4.A. on page one. Mr. Turbin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**3. PETITIONER'S REQUEST:** None.

**4. ITEMS FOR SELECTMEN'S CONSIDERATION:**

**A. Agricultural Commission Appointments (Wells, Bernardy, Pomerantz)** – Ms. Allen moved to appoint Maribeth Pomerantz and Andrew Bernardy to the Agricultural Commission with terms to end on June 30, 2010 and to appoint Kim Wells to the Agricultural Commission with a term to end on June 30, 2011 with thanks. Mr. Steege seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**B. COOL Challenge (Penner)** – Ms. Penner distributed Williamstown COOL Challenge informational packets to the selectmen. The packets contained information on obtaining a home energy assessment through National Grid, energy financial incentives available in the state and other opportunities to join with neighbors to save energy, money and reduce carbon emissions by 10% by 2010. She urged selectmen to take advantage of the online calculator to estimate their carbon footprint and to set a goal for a 10% reduction. Ms. Penner said that residents can register for the COOL Challenge by going online to [www.coolwilliamstown.org](http://www.coolwilliamstown.org) and entering their name and e-mail address. All reductions will count toward Williamstown's CO2 reduction goal.

**C. Municipal Wetlands Protection By-Law (McKnight)** – Conservation Commission Chairman Philip McKnight gave a Power Point presentation on a proposed Municipal Wetlands Protection By-law that would expand the amount of protected wetlands in town by supplementing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. The bylaw would expand the protection of wetlands to include additional intermittent streams and vernal pools by another 598 acres over the current 4984 acres.

Ms. Allen expressed concerned about the differences between last year's map and this

year's proposed map of the already protected areas and the areas that would be protected if the bylaw were passed. McKnight responded that the state DEP reviewed the bylaw last year and said the commission had missed a number of already protected lands. Therefore, the commission has had a year to study the town's wetlands in detail and has therefore updated the map. Ms. Allen said one of her concerns is that we are in a cycle of wetness, and we seem to be getting wetter, making her think that we're going to have more ditches and channels sometimes. Ms. Allen said the new requirements could intrude on the rights of the roughly 242 landowners whose property will become protected and to her it's a property rights issue. Mr. Ennis responded that the new bylaw would not limit people anymore than the Wetlands Protection Act already does. He added that he knows there is a lot of fear out there that this is going to be some big expansive thing or that somehow or another we've created new protection for lands that aren't really wetlands at all. He said that there is a big difference between a wetland and what isn't.

Mr. Costley expressed concern that the seemingly flexible definition of what can be protected could either leave the town open to exploitation by people wanting to get an area defined as a wetland or limit people who want to build within the zones that could be created. He said "if you go from what's written to what's possible – because you have to consider what's possible – it could be far more than you anticipate, not because of an agenda on your part but by how language can be used later by somebody else."   Mr. McKnight pointed out that there is an "exemptions and exceptions" section which states the bylaw will not affect existing structures and land as long as there is no unreasonable damage to the wetland.

Mr. Rempell suggested all future questions on the bylaw be e-mailed to the commission so they can be researched and addressed. Mr. Fohlin stated that the Selectmen didn't have to approve the bylaw for it to get on the town warrant rather it could be entered as a citizen's petition by a citizen who collects at least 10 signatures. He added the Board of Selectmen often doesn't take a stance on these issues.

**D. Confirmation of Appointment to Conservation Commission – Sarah Gardner –**  
Mr. Costley moved to confirm the appointment of Sarah Gardner to the Conservation Commission as presented by the town manager. Ms. Allen seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**E. Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation - Conservation Restriction Interest -** Chairman Rempell announced the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation's interest in a conservation restriction on land in Williamstown and signed a certificate of announcement to be mailed to the DCR.

**5. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: See separate report.**

**6. OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Costley stated that the new Williamstown website is brilliant and attractive and complimented Mr. Fohlin and Chris Fohlin on their work building the site.

Mr. Costley thanked the highway department for making an unexpected repair to his

mailbox. He also congratulated the high school boys and girls Nordic ski team who won the state championship, led by the Green family. He also thanked the team for hosting the first fundraiser in Mathias Bartels' name. He took part in it and had a great time.

Mr. Rempell congratulated the high school basketball team who will also go to Western Mass. Mr. Turbin added that the high school will present the play "Anything Goes".

**7. ADJOURN:** Mr. Costley moved to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. Ms. Allen seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is March 10, 2008 at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Costley  
Secretary

TC/kp